



SEE-IFA-NETWORK – Thematic Seminar Meeting “Analysis of the financial instruments – pre-feasibility studies and future steps of WP 4” *30 June 2010 – Milan* Minutes

Each Thematic Seminar, where all partners met twice a year, has a specific focus: the Milan TS¹ was specifically held to discuss the general overview of WP 4 activities and is hosted by FINLOM, responsible of this WP.

Participants at the seminar were:

LP² delegation: R. Mosburger, A. Waclik, A. Tkacheva

ERDF PP 1³ delegation: apologies

ERDF PP 2⁴ delegation: F. Cannatelli, F. Biancheri, C. Denti

ERDF PP 3⁵ delegation: M. Michopoulou, M. Kalmantis

ERDF PP 4⁶ delegation: R. Gonczi

ERDF PP 5⁷ delegation: apologies

ERDF PP 6⁸ delegation: O. Alupej, M. Mitroi

ERDF PP 7⁹ delegation: S. Keleman, S. Berlec

IPA PP 1¹⁰ delegation: T. Velkovski, B. Jovanovski

10% PP 1¹¹ delegation: P. Galeski

10% PP 2¹² delegation: M. Paunov, I. Zivkovic

¹ TS= Thematic Seminar

² LP= Lead Partner – AWS (Austria)

³ ERDF PP 1= EPF – Euro Perspective Foundation (Bulgaria)

⁴ ERDF PP 2= FINLOM= Finlombarda SpA (Italy)

⁵ ERDF PP 3= GEORAMA (Greece)

⁶ ERDF PP 4= TETALAP – Hungarian Science and Technology Foundation (Hungary)

⁷ ERDF PP 5= RegVEN= Region Veneto – Industry Department (Italy)

⁸ ERDF PP 6= AMCSIT= Politehnica (Romania)

⁹ ERDF PP 7= SID – Slovene Export and Development Bank Inc (Slovenia)

¹⁰ IPA PP 1= FME – Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius (FYROM)

¹¹ 10% PP 1= AZRA – Varazdin County Development Agency (Croatia)

¹² 10% PP 2= RDA Banat (Serbia)

The meeting started with an introductory speech by Mr. Zaggia, Head of EU Projects Department of ERDF PP 2 welcoming all participants to the meeting and stressing the importance of such a project for the organization. He then briefly gave a presentation of Finlombarda's main activities within the Lombardy territory.

Then he passed the floor to R. Mosburger who introduced the overall status quo of the SEE IFA NETWORK project.

R. Mosburger briefly gave a presentation of the current status of the project, saying that all WPs¹³ have been started and some of them almost completed (WP 3). Some of the WPs recorded a 3-4 month delay in their implementation (WP 2 and WP 3) and, as a consequence, also WP 4 had a general delay of 3-4 months as regards to the timing scheduled in the contract.

Then she mentioned that for some partners, a budget modification will be necessary, but that over the whole project duration, it is possible only once to apply for a budget change. Therefore all partners were asked to assess their respective needs for budget modification within the next months. Meanwhile, A. Waclik will investigate the required procedures for budget modifications and inform all partners about the requested steps. .

Then, she passed the floor to A. Waclik for a focus on the administrative project status.

WP 1 "Management": A. Waclik explained the state of the art of the Reporting specifying that only 3 ERDF partners have received the EC reimbursement (AWS, TETALAP, AMCSIT). First EC reimbursement has been received by LP in May 2010 (for Payment Claim of AWS, TETALAP, AMCSIT), second EC reimbursement was expected to arrive in December 2010 (for Payment Claim of AWS, FINLOM, TETALAP, AMCSIT).

Then she talked about difficulties faced by some partners (EPF, GEORAMA, SID BANK) with their FLC¹⁴ and expressed her expectation that these problems will be solved by next reporting period.

She then presented the peculiarity of next Reporting Period underlining that the 3rd RP would be split into 2 different periods (each of 3 months) due to possible money cuts through the SEE¹⁵ program after the 3rd period. So A. Waclik reminded partners of the decommitment issue and the importance of participating actively in the project and reporting all incurred expenditure in a timely manner. She noted that she had inquired at JTS but was not provided with very concise information on the criteria of the decommitment rule that would be applied in case by JTS¹⁶ at program level.

Finally, she talked about the procedure concerning the project budget changes describing the 20% flexibility for smaller shifts (under +20%) between budget lines and WPs (positions). However, any shifts

¹³ WPs= Work Packages

¹⁴ FLC= First Level Control

¹⁵ SEE= South East Europe

¹⁶ JTS= Joint Technical Secretariat

above the 20% level or among partners will require formal proceedings and an application for a budget modification to the SEE program.

R. Mosburger asked for a brief general feedback from partners concerning potential future needed budget changes.

UKIM FME: T. Velkovski explained that the contract has already been signed but that unfortunately they received an approx. 25% budget cut without explanations, with a also a reduction of the project duration, nor they received the national co-financing (though the contract has been signed already). . It was suggested that UKIM FME should investigate with their contracting authority whether a project prolongation would theoretically be possible.

AZRA: P. Galeski explained that they had a need for external experts eg. within WP4 (for the drawing of the prefeasibility studies), which would need to be covered out of an ERDF PPs budget.

AMCSIT: M. Mitroi replied that AMCSIT would assess their needs for budget shifts until autumn 2010.

TETALAP explained that they would most probably not be able to spend the whole budget but that they had already received the total 15% national cofinancing in advance.

RDA Banat: M. Paunov replied that they did not have any specific needs for changes.

FINLOM: F. Biancheri suggested that FINLOM could first apply soft budget changes not exceeding 20%, but also to assess the need for a broader shift. These might be necessary also in relation with covering external experts for AZRA or RDA Banat from the Finlom-budget on the one hand and with the shift of the internship from Finlom to aws on the other hand; FINLOM could have a clearer idea in the following months.

GEORAMA explained their financial situation, underlining that they had some problems with their FLC (which didn't accept their type of staffcosts) and faced difficulties in getting co-financing because of political adversities. They hoped the situation will change in the following months. As a consequence, it makes sense for them to ask for budget allocation only after the FLC issues have been sorted out.

FME: T. Velkovski discussed with the LP in order to solve problems related to the internship and the difficulty for FINLOM to host such initiative within its structure. R. Mosburger underlined that the internship should last at maximum 5 months and that in principle, it would be possible to postpone the starting date until May/June 2011, but that it was necessary to verify the feasibility within aws structure.

For SID bank, it was difficult to estimate needs for budget changes at the moment, also because of FLC problems. However, they expected to receive their first declaration for period 1 from the FLC by August 2010.

The LP asked partners to estimate their financial needs until autumn 2010 and to start to make a general overview of necessary budget changes to ask eventually to JTS.

WP 2 “Communication and Dissemination”: M. Mitroi gave a general presentation of WP 2 activities concerning the website and the main dissemination activities and presented the conclusions arisen during the SC¹⁷ meeting for the possibility to use the alert message as a common device to share documents and discussions on the intranet section of SEE IFA the website (www.see-ifa.eu). AMCSIT asked all partners to send the names and numbers of each partner’s users.

R. Mosburger suggested that documents such as the WP 3 Synthesis, the newsletters, the partners meetings’ minutes, press releases should be uploaded to the public section of the website, and the partners’ country reports and feasibility studies on the intranet section.

WP 3 “The Analysis”: M. Mitroi explained that at this stage of the project, AMCSIT’s work for WP 3 was already completed. The final Report will be soon uploaded on the website, after aws has carried out a few final refinements for publication on the website.

WP 5 “The Fund”: A. Tkacheva gave an overview of the WP 5 with main activities and deliverables carried out for the implementation of the Cross Border Patent Fund. In order to carry out the demand analysis, 90 interviews have been submitted by all participating partners (except Italian partners) and been included into the report on the Demand Analysis. This report will be the basis for the feasibility study where it would be possible to verify the possibilities of implementing the Patent Fund within the SEE area. On the basis of the partners’ feedback, a set of recommendations for the patent fund implementation will be drafted and addressed to the European Commission. These conclusions will be included into the Recommendation Report, which will be available at the end of the project.

For the implementation of the fund the assessment of the financing possibilities has to be carried out and at least 2 financing sources for each partner need to be analyzed and assessed.

It was agreed to publish the Feasibility Study on the Cross Border Patent Fund in the intranet section of the website.

WP 7 “The Training”: R. Mosburger gave a general overview of WP 7 explaining that the Training Concept was almost completed, except for the missing status of internship for FME due to the pending situation of ERDF PP2 and the impossibility to host a trainee in its structure.

R. Mosburger explained that all training activities for the period concerned have been carried out (Intensive Training Course for Patent and License Management, TTT in FME, Study Visit for aws) and asked RDA Banat and AZRA to send aws their needs for the TTT (Train-the-trainer-training). The TTT for RDA BANAT will be carried out in autumn 2010 for AZRA at the beginning of 2011.

¹⁷ SC= Steering Committee

The next training activities will be the internship for the AZRA trainee in aws, starting beginning of July 2010 and at the internship for the RDA Banat trainee in aws, scheduled from September 2010. Since the planned internship for UKIM FME cannot be carried out in Finlombarda, it still needs to be clarified whether it can be shifted to aws.

The next Study Visit would be realized in Italy (Milan and Venice) in early October 2010 (4th -8th of October 2010).

WP 4 “The Financial Instruments”: F. Cannatelli gave a general overview on the status quo of WP 4, highlighting that the activities are in delay (3-4 months) due to the initial delay accumulated in the implementation of WP 3 and foresaw the conclusion of the activity 4.1 (analysis of the financial instruments) in September 2010.

Then he explained step by step the achieved activities and outputs realized within WP 4: the assessment process of country needs and almost 27 good practices has been concluded and analyzed through the assessment grid.

F. Cannatelli briefly described the main country needs in terms of target, type of innovation, support type of financing, objective, geographic coverage. The most highly ranked needs were: - support to developed companies;

- Creation of networks among SMEs and research organizations;
- Investment in innovative technology and create innovative products and services
- provide easier access to finance for SMEs.

The following evaluation criteria were most highly ranked by the PPS and were used for the assessment of the good practice instruments:

- Efficiency of funding;
- Innovation effects;
- Simplicity and transparency;
- Knowledge sharing.

Then, F. Cannatelli presented those instruments for each partner, that best matched the requirements of the partners according to the assessment grid.

Three main programs have been selected and proposed to the partners as a result of the assessment process:

- Fondo SEED for AZRA and RDA BANAT;
- Innovation Support Program for GEORAMA and TETALAP;
- Metadistretti for AMCSIT.

F. Cannatelli explained that some partners have already chosen one of these three instruments, but that 3 partners have not yet selected any proposed instrument yet (EPF, SID BANK, FME). It was agreed that EPF, SID BANK and FME will give feedback to F. Cannatelli by 15 July 2010.

On the basis of the selected instruments, the prefeasibility studies will be carried out for each partner and instrument. Then F. Cannatelli described the structure of the pre-feasibility study briefly to the partners, stressing the importance of marketing the new instruments to local donors, which will start in 2011 and be coordinated by FINLOM in collaboration with the respective partners.

F. Cannatelli announced that he expected to finalize all prefeasibility studies by the end of September 2010 in strict collaboration with all partners.

Concerning the implications of WP 4 activities for WP 6 he also stressed the importance to have a portfolio of new instruments to apply for the new agency, even if WP 6 would be focused exclusively on the IPA countries.

WP 6 “The Agency”: Unfortunately colleagues from REGVEN were not able to attend the meeting as some internal organization issues were encountered.

R. Mosburger explained that the REGVEN has already sent interviews to Croatia, Serbia and FYROM concerning additional information on innovation in their countries and were waiting only for feedback from FYROM in order to prepare the needs assessments, which should then be sent to the involved partners for feedback.

In general, partners participated actively in the project activities and all WPs were in progress. WP 4 and WP 6 have been affected by the initial delay accumulated by WP 3. Some partners still met difficulties with their FLCs and national co-financing, but the situation was expected to be solved in some months.

The meeting was closed concluding that all participants worked according to the To Do's and Time Schedule filled in during the final stage of the meeting.

LP concluded that further clarifications have to be asked to JTS concerning possible larger budget changes and that a more detailed discussion on budget shift could be held during next Steering Committee and Thematic Seminar to be organized in Vienna in November 2010.